



WHY CHOOSE THIS COURSE?

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

Leadership Beyond Good Enough – The turning point for Svitzer UK, by Mark Malone, Svitzer.

Background

I joined Svitzer UK just as Siegfried had conducted a first pilot session for leadership training. We had a decision to make, could this course fundamentally change the way the company operates, the way our employees interact and could it ultimately assist in delivering the Return on Investment our shareholders both expected and needed.

Svitzer UK is a significant part of a very traditional industry. An industry that has been characterised by gradual consolidation over many years with misaligned management perceptions, outdated union led working practices and a general fear of change.

This was therefore a big ask and significant challenge.

Process

Siegfried and I compared notes before embarking on the process, the situation we faced could be described as follows:

1. We had management team who described the tug crews and unions as a problem and obstacle to progress, and we had crew members who felt the same way about management.
2. Mistrust and fear existed across all communication points
3. Whilst all colleagues felt change was vital, few colleagues spent any time considering what this should be and had little faith that we had the knowledge and capability to deliver it anyway.

We agreed therefore that we need leadership programme to both break down the barriers constructed between the workforce and management and also create a transparent and common goal for the company to achieve within a 400 day window.

As we started the 400 day plan, it became quite clear that progress was being made either difficult or plain impossible by historical relationships and mistrust. Colleagues said one thing, but demonstrated another. We therefore took a decision very quickly that we needed fundamental change to both the management structure and personnel to enable this change process to succeed.

Within the first half of the 400 day period, 90% of the management positions were either changed or removed completely. Port meetings involving all employees were commenced, company data was openly shared and communicated, and specific strategies involving all employees were drafted at each operational port. For the first time, all employees felt engaged, involved and listened to.

Outcome

We are now less than 30 days away from the end of the 400 day period. The recession has hit the UK badly during this time with our sales down by more than 20%. Company performance however has improved. As we come out of the 400 day period, we are looking at a return on investment that has increased by 400%, our safety and accident ratio has more than halved and is improving with each month that goes past, and our operating margin has increased by over 50%. We have amicably improved the flexibility and cost of union agreements, we have workgroups in place at all ports openly discussing how our operation can be improved further and the boundaries between the ashore and afloat staff are being broken down with every passing day.

The Leadership course that Siegfried conducted has changed the hearts and minds of our employees, it painted a path for us to follow, and clarified the organisational changes required. It shattered the myth that we had employees resistant to doing what is right, and has galvanised all of us around one single agenda.

The role Siegfried personally played, which went far beyond just course delivery, was invaluable. All employees trusted him, if not the company. He managed to turn frustrations into tangible and constructive actions, and he created an accepted vision that the required change was good for everyone if they played their part.

I cannot praise Siegfried enough for the instrumental role he has played in turning the company around, and we together, and I include all employees, are looking to a bright and rewarding future which is beyond just "good enough".